

greatly encouraged the red-nosed guzzlers all over the country. Methinks I can hear them say, "Exactly. Ther good bisherp is right. Mine pizness is honerable. Mine shaloon is a good thing. It is a nerchessity."

Yes, a necessity, Mr. Saloon Keeper,—

"Necessary to make the strong man weak  
Necessary to lay the strong man low;  
Necessary the wife's strong heart to break,  
And make the children's tears to flow.

Necessary to do thy neighbor harm,  
Necessary to kindle hate and strife;  
Necessary to nerve the robber's arm,  
Necessary to whet the murderer's knife

Necessary thy neighbor's purse to drain,  
And rob him of his very best:  
Necessary to heat his feverish brain,  
Till madness crown thy work at last.

Necessary, like spider for a fly,  
To spread thy nets for man, thy prey;  
To mock his struggles, suck him dry,  
Then cast the shattered husk away.

Necessary, where peace and quiet dwell,  
To bring disease, and want, and woe;  
Necessary to make this world a hell,  
And fit man for a hell below."

*Roann, Ind.*

#### BITTER—SWEET

MAGGIE SMITH

Every day practical religion often has to be parsed in the passive voice as well as in the active. A healthy Christian ought to be equal to either fighting bravely in the field or suffering bravely in the hospital. In other words a very practical part of our religion often lies in sweetening the bitter things of life and in patiently bearing its trials and burdens. All of a Christian life does not consist in praying and battling with temptation and working for Christ in the church and elsewhere. We see the great army of Israel standing on the border of the wilderness the Red Sea, Pharaoh's host and Egypt are behind them, the land of milk and honey is only a short distance before. We hear the loud exclamations of joy and peace from thousands of throats. We see the host of women praising God with timbrel and dance. They fancy the last enemy is conquered, the last trial is past, but alas, before three days their joyful song is turned to bitter lamentations. It was not so hard to march out of Egypt after the miracles; it was not so hard to cross the sea after Moses' rod had divided the waters. But Oh, this three day's marching over dry sands and under a burning sun and not a spring or well by the way to slake the burning thirst. Alas, for the cattle; alas, for the women and the little ones. But now they are nearing the waters of Marah, now for the trial of faith. But at last God has heard how eagerly they hasten forward. With what breathless haste they catch the water in their hands and press it to their burning lips. Alas, the water is bitter. Now comes the testing

time. How many of us are right here so quick to murmur and complain, when things do not go to suit us we find it bitter, too bitter for either man or beast to drink and with severe reproaches they turn to Moses, why have you brought us into the wilderness to die? Is it ever so? The cup of sweetness as we press it to our lips turns to wormwood. Adam could not long remain in undisturbed possession of his newly found and greatest of earthly treasures. The woman whom thou gavest to be with me she gave me of the tree and I did eat. After a wonderful victory and success we see the most fearless of the prophets fleeing to the wilderness and despair under a juniper tree praying to die. Hannah cried out in bitterness of soul because she was childless. The mother-in-law of Ruth cried out, "call me not Naomi call me Marah, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." The sweet-singer of Israel said, "my tears have been my meat day and night while they continually say unto me where is thy God." Dark days came to even patient Job in-somuch that we hear him say, "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble." Naaman was a great man with his Master and honorable but he was a leper. Was the wise man right when he said, "the heart knoweth its own bitterness?" Must every palace have its corresponding hovel, every rose its thorn, every sunbeam its cloud?" "Be still, sad heart and cease repining, behind the cloud is the sun still shining?" Doubt sees the heavy cloud, the threatening storm; faith sees the silver lining and feels sure that the sun will soon burst forth in all its splendor and make diamonds of the raindrops over every spear of grass. All things, not somethings, but "all things work together for good to them that love God." How hard it is for some Christians to believe this. They make a great mistake when they do not recognize the hand of God in shaping the circumstances that surround their lives. How much heart ache and sorrow we would be saved from if we only trusted our heavenly Father as readily as we do our earthly father.

The flaming sword was not set at the gateway of Eden until after the promise of the Redeemer had been given. The discouraged, fainting prophet was fed by a heavenly visitant, and ere long we see him wafted out of our sight in the chariot of God. Naomi spent her last days happily and was buried in her own country and among her own people, and even Naaman found a stream of cleansing sorrow comes in turn to all of us, but God's hand can work a wondrous change. He can transform a "sorrow into joy," a "burden into a blessing." The howling tempest on Galilee brought Jesus on board. We see the prophet

and law-giver of Israel in his extremity prostrate before the Almighty and the Lord showed him a tree which when he had cast into the waters the waters were made sweet. In the strength of this sweetened water Israel marched to Elim where were twelve wells of water and three score and ten palm trees an emerald patch of paradise in the midst of the sand. Under the shadow of the palms they rest and recuperate mind and body and gather strength for the weary march before them. If they had not made the best of Marah they would never have reached Elim. As God then dealt with his people he is still dealing. The Beulah land is before us. Although a bitter well may lie between us and it. But if we trust our Heavenly Father he will sweeten every bitter cup in his love and tenderness. He provides for the little sparrows and notes the fall of every one of them; and has he not said, "ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Let us accept graciously the bitter with the sweet as it comes from his hands that we may gain strength and grow thereby, and in that strength with unflagging step press our way onward and upward, never losing sight of Jesus our great captain of our salvation, who has marked out the way for us to walk therein. It is truly a narrow way, but praise the Lord we do not have to go alone. Jesus is ever ready to help us. He says, "Lo I am with you alway even unto the end."

#### ANOTHER TRIAL

C. H. WETHERBE

When a person has committed a serious blunder, or fallen into some conspicuous sin, there are many who believe that he ought to be cast off, shunned and left to himself. But this is not the way that our God deals with us; if he did we would surely perish forever. When we have once fallen he gives us another trial. He has compassion on our weakness. He recognizes our frailties. He bears long with our infirmities. He continues to forgive our repeated sins.

Rev. L. A. Banks says: "In the story of Mark there is a message of hope. Five years had passed away after his desertion, and Paul and Barnabas had returned from their journeyings in great joy and triumph. After a while they decided to go again and visit the churches, which they had formed in their long missionary tour, and build them up in the faith. John Mark had now come to his senses and earnestly desired that he might accompany these great preachers again. But Paul, remembering his former desertion, would not consent to have him one of the party. Barnabas, however, who was Mark's cousin, believed in the young man and plead that he should be given another trial. Paul, refusing to permit this, they separated,